Business Plan

2017–2018

Department of Justice

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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Message from the Minister

It is my privilege to present the Nova Scotia Department of Justice's Business Plan for 2017-18 with a focus on **responsive justice**.

I'm proud of the work that the Department is doing and the contributions that our staff make daily. **Our goals** in the upcoming year will be:

- to support access to justice for those who struggle the most;
- to promote a culture of innovation in the effective and efficient delivery of our services; and
- to enhance the public safety, well-being and economic stability of all Nova Scotians.

I have the honour of co-chairing the Access to Justice Coordinating Committee with Chief Justice Michael MacDonald. The Committee is moving forward with the *Talk Justice* project to hear directly from Nova Scotians regarding the justice system.

The **overrepresentation** of both those who identify as Aboriginal and African Nova Scotians in our criminal justice system is a challenge that we will address as a priority. An **Aboriginal Justice Strategy** will be developed and all divisions will institute cultural competency training and consider responsive programming. We will also continue to support **Initiatives** for **African Nova Scotians** such as the Correctional Services hiring initiative and the Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative for law student placements.

The Department has expanded the use of **Restorative Justice** for adults. We will work with community and justice stakeholders to further embed this way of doing justice differently.

We will work with the Chiefs of Police on several fronts including training, standards and audits of core policing functions.

We will work with other government departments, stakeholders and the public to have a more supportive province for women and children (focusing on **maintenance enforcement**, a new **domestic violence court** in HRM and supporting the ongoing work initiated by the province's sexual violence strategy).

Many of the issues that the department will address this year have arisen from outside pressures. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada decision *R v. Jordan* will require the department to work with stakeholders and the judiciary to support innovative approaches to address delays in our court system. The department will support and fund increased use of

technology such as video conferencing and e-tracking of case progression to support criminal justice system best practices.

Correctional Services will work to strengthen the successful reintegration of offenders into the community.

We are assuming responsibility for the province's ***Accessibility Act***. This Act will provide a framework to make the province more accessible for persons with disabilities.

We will collaborate with our partners to help Nova Scotians access and navigate the **family justice system** through improvements to the nsfamilylaw.ca website. This includes working with the Family Law for Indigenous Families Committee to develop content to assist indigenous families accessing the justice system and working with Nova Scotia Legal Aid to create videos on preparing family court documents.

Much of the work that we do is supported by the Policy and Information Management division which provides policy analysis and development, including the provision of metrics to support evidence-based decision making by our department and stakeholders.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the department's valuable partners, who are instrumental in making Nova Scotia safe and secure.

Diana Whalen

Honourable Diana Whalen
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Mandate

"The Department of Justice is responsible for the administration of justice and for promoting the safety and security of Nova Scotians through justice-related programs, services and initiatives."

To accomplish its mandate, the department provides services through four core business areas:

- Public Safety and Security
- Court Services
- Correctional Services, and
- Legal Services to Government.

The Department of Justice is focused on achieving results in the following areas as identified in the Minister's Mandate letter from the Premier, December 18, 2015.

- Work with partner agencies to assess and respond to recommendations in the Independent Review of the Police and Prosecution Response to the Rehtaeh Parsons Case conducted by Murray D. Segal.
- Increase compliance with maintenance orders through initiatives such as implementation of the Maintenance Enforcement Program Review Committee Report.
- Review and respond to recommendations made in the occupational health and safety review of sheriff services.
- Given the recent decision by the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia regarding cyberbullying, the Department will explore options that maintain the Government commitment to protect Nova Scotians, particularly youth.

Core Responsibilities/Services

The Department of Justice has core responsibilities and provides services as outlined below:

- Administration of Courts and administrative support to the judiciary.
- Administration of Victim Services Program.
- Administration of Sheriff Services Program.
- Administration of Maintenance Enforcement Program.
- Provision of Family Law Services.
- Legislative oversight for policing, private security, firearms control.
- Responsible for the Restorative Justice Program delivered by community agencies.
- Operation of Nova Scotia's youth and adult correctional facilities and administration of custodial and community supervision.
- Delivery of programs and services that support public safety and wellbeing including such things as offender rehabilitation and reintegration, and crime prevention initiatives.
- Provision of legal advice to government and litigation for or against the crown.

- Minister is responsible for the Office of the Public Trustee, the Medical Examiner Service, the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT), and the Disabled Persons Commission.

Goal to be Achieved:

- Department of Justice supports access to justice especially for those who struggle most.

Actions:

1. Continue to make improvements to the Maintenance Enforcement Program and work to enforce maintenance orders for child and spousal support that is vital to the economic stability of more than 16,000 children and youth who are served by the program.
2. Expand the Domestic Violence Court into the Halifax Regional Municipality.
3. In collaboration with stakeholders, develop and implement an Aboriginal Justice Strategy.
4. Introduction of new legislation to replace the *Incompetent Persons Act*.
5. Lead the implementation of the Accessibility Legislation to create a more accessible province where all persons can participate fully.
6. Pilot a program to provide survivors and victims of sexual assault with independent legal information to help them make informed decisions about their case.
7. Deliver enhanced family law programs and services such as Assisted Dispute Resolution for Interjurisdictional Support Orders and family law content for Indigenous families.

Performance Measures:

Measure	Base Year Data	Target	Trends
Percentage of Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) cases in full compliance*	2015-16: 41%	Year over year increase in percentage of cases in full compliance	
Percentage of Maintenance Enforcement cases where regular monthly	2015-16: 18%	Year over year increase in percentage of cases in this category	

<table>
<tr><td>payments are made and arrears are being reduced</td><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Percentage of Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) cases compliant with total monthly payments due **</td><td rowspan="4">2014-15: 61%</td><td rowspan="4">NS rate to be above national rate</td><td>Year</td><td>NS</td><td>Canada</td></tr>
<tr><td>2012-13</td><td>64%</td><td>56%</td></tr>
<tr><td>2013-14</td><td>63%</td><td>57%</td></tr>
<tr><td>2014-15</td><td>61%</td><td>56%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Percentage of clients who were satisfied with Parent Information Program</td><td>2015-16: 91%</td><td>Maintain level of satisfaction</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Percentage of clients who rated overall service received from Provincial Victim Services Program as "Good" or "Very Good" ***</td><td>2016-17: 83%</td><td></td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Percentage of Provincial Victim Services Clients who would recommend program to others in similar situation***</td><td>2016-17: 94%</td><td></td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
</table>

** Reflects the percentage of cases where the regular payment is made and no arrears are owing.*

***Source, Statistics Canada. Includes cases that are in full compliance with total scheduled monthly payments due in March of fiscal year. Excludes cases where the payor lives outside of Nova Scotia.*

**** The "Ratings of the Provincial Victim Services Program" are from interviews with 100 clients conducted in December, 2016. A methodology for collecting client satisfaction feedback on an ongoing basis is currently being developed.*

Goal to be Achieved:

- Department of Justice has a culture of innovation in effective and efficient services.

Actions:

1. Maintain confidence in the justice system through improved criminal court processing and an effective response to the Supreme Court of Canada decision on unreasonable delay, *R v. Jordan*, ensuring that cases are not dismissed because of system delays.
2. Increase the usage of the Restorative Justice Program as an option for adults in conflict with the law.
3. Assess the CeaseFire Violence Interruption Model.
4. Work with the Judiciary and Justice partners to leverage technology to increase the use of video-conferencing and track case progression.
5. Collaborate with justice partners to use technology to more effectively deliver family law information.
6. Improve Restorative Justice data collection and sharing.

Performance Measures:

Measure	Base Year Data	Target	Trends	
Number of Jordan unreasonable delay applications	2017-18:	Identify baseline data for causes of delays	Year	# of applications
			2017-18	
Number of successful Jordan unreasonable delay applications	2017-18:	Identify baseline data for causes of delays	Year	# of applications
			2017-18	
Number of hearings where an accused appears in court via video conferencing	2015-16: 686	Twenty percent increase in use of video-conferencing	Year	# of hearings
			2015-16	686

Number of adult referrals made to the Restorative Justice Program	2015-16: CBRM: 157 Colchester/East Hants: 85	Increase the number of referrals		
Number of unique users of NSFamilylaw.ca	2013-14: 148,142 unique users	Maintain the number of users	2013-14	148, 142
			2014-15	213,235
			2015-16	355,755
Percentage of Nova Scotians who have some confidence in the justice system	Base year: 2005 74%	Maintain/increase public confidence in the justice system.	Year	% of public having some confidence in the justice system
			2005	74
			2006	76
			2007	70
			2008	72
			2009	76
			2010	74
			2011	75
			2012	74
			2013	76
			2014	72
			2015	84
			2016	77

Goal:

- Department of Justice supports public safety, well-being and economic stability of Nova Scotians.

Actions:

1. Improve the cyber safety of Nova Scotian adults and youth.
2. Implement provincial initiatives to accommodate the federal policy to legalize cannabis.
3. Review and respond to the recommendations of the 2015 Occupational Health and Safety Report on Sheriff Services' and the follow-up staffing analysis report.
4. Enhance rehabilitation of offenders through evidence-based programming for adults and youth.
5. Review the conditions of close confinement for offenders.

6. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address opioid misuse in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness.
7. Participation of divisions in competency training and expansion of service delivery programs to address the over-representation of both Aboriginals and African Nova Scotians in the Justice system.
8. Invest and expand the work of restorative approaches in schools through the recruitment of a Restorative Approaches Coordinator.
9. Complete the Additional Officer Program Review.
10. Ensure police audits are completed (major crime investigation, sexual assault).

Performance Measures:

Measure	Base Year Data	Target	Trends
Participant feedback on enhanced knowledge about online security from CyberScan presentations through surveys of participants	2017-18	Identify baseline data in 2017-18	
Number of people who have attended competency training in the department	2017-18:	Identify baseline data in 2017-18	
Number of people who attended sessions on opioid abuse	2016-17: 120	Maintain the number	
Number of schools applying restorative approaches	2016-17: 120 schools	Increase the number of schools by 5%	

Departmental Expenses Summary
($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2016-2017 Estimate	2016-2017 Forecast	2017-2018 Estimate
Administration	20,658	19,944	21,312
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	24,340	24,340	25,456
Court Services	70,332	70,332	72,982
Correctional Services	69,617	69,821	71,550
Public Trustee	2,390	2,301	2,557
Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service	4,057	4,389	4,063
Public Safety and Security	138,381	137,210	140,940
Serious Incident Response Team	613	609	599
Accessibility Directorate	0	0	896
Total - Departmental Expenses	330,388	328,946	340,355
Ordinary Recoveries	115,643	115,888	118,913
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	1,596.7	1,561.1	1,629.4

Note:
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1